



Australian Bureau of Statistics

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Summary

Main Features

1996 CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING FACT SHEET 4 1996 CENSUS DWELLING COUNTS

SOME ISSUES FOR USERS OF THE DATA

This Fact Sheet addresses changes to the enumeration and classification of private and non-private dwellings that occurred between the 1991 and 1996 Censuses and their subsequent impact on these counts.

1. Enumeration procedures for private and non-private dwellings

Private dwellings are enumerated on household forms which obtain information on the household and families, as well as on the individuals present.

Non-private dwellings are enumerated differently, with each person present enumerated on a personal form. No information on households and families present is obtained.

The 1996 census defines Non-private dwellings (NPDs) as "...establishments that provide a communal type of accommodation. Examples are hotels, motels, hospitals and residential colleges." (pg 221, 1996 Census Dictionary, 2901.0). For the purposes of census collection and processing, a building must **either** be classified as a non-private dwelling (NPD), **or** every separate unit in the building classified as a private dwelling (the variable Dwelling Structure (DWTD) is then used to identify that it is a flat, unit, or apartment in a block).

Since 1986, special procedures have been used for caravan parks and marinas. These establishments are enumerated using procedures similar to those for non-private dwellings, but households within caravan parks are enumerated on household forms, and so household and family information is obtained. In 1996, these procedures have been extended to other types of dwellings. The variable 'Dwelling Location' (DLOD) has been introduced to identify dwellings where these procedures were used.

2. Changes to enumeration procedures

2.1. Accommodation for the Retired or Aged

Self-care units in Retirement or Aged Care villages were enumerated using the procedures previously used for caravan parks, with these units now being treated as private dwellings rather than as part of a NPD. Thus, for the first time, in the 1996 Census information on households and families in these units will be available. The change in enumeration procedures between 1991 and 1996 will have some effect on private dwelling counts, particularly in some areas. In Australia, Self-care units in Retirement villages accounted for 45,819 dwellings, or 0.6% of all occupied private dwellings.

2.2. Manufactured Home Estates (MHEs)

Manufactured homes in Manufactured Home Estates were also enumerated using the procedures previously used for caravan parks, with the units in these establishments now being treated as private dwellings rather than as part of a NPD. The change in enumeration procedures between 1991 and 1996 will have some effect on private dwelling counts. Manufactured homes in Manufactured Home Estates accounted for 6,243 dwellings in Australia in the 1996 Census, or 0.1% of all occupied private dwellings.

2.3. Holiday units, serviced apartments, etc

As mentioned earlier in this document, a building must **either** be classified as a non-private dwelling (NPD), **or** every separate unit in the building classified as a private dwelling (the variable Dwelling Structure (DWTD) is then used to identify that it is a flat, unit, or apartment in a block). Such a classification is generally clear-cut, however in holiday areas and the central business districts (CBDs) of the major cities, an increasing number of buildings now accommodate large numbers of permanent residents in serviced apartments, and/or hotel-style accommodation.

Census collectors are instructed to try and determine whether usual residents or short term residents form the majority in a building, and use the same census form for **all** units in the building. Strict adherence to this procedure both in the collection phase and the processing phase for the 1996 Census may effect the **comparison of private dwelling data between 1991 and 1996** for specific areas at the smaller levels, ie CD or some SLA's.

Users should be aware of a number of factors when comparing this data over time:

- Some differences did occur in the implementation of collection and processing procedures used for the 1996 and 1991 Censuses, even though the definition of the variable did not change;
- Differences in the classification of NPDs and private dwellings used by other collections, such as Building approvals and commencements collections, will produce different counts to the census counts;
- Changes occur in the usage of buildings, and in individual apartments, between the intended usage stated at the approval stage and the actual occupancy as recorded at census date; i.e. a building originally approved for permanent residents may be partially converted to serviced apartments for higher returns.
- Other factors affecting the validity of making comparisons with other data sources (e.g. commencement applications lodged but not completed, etc.) should be considered also.

- Changes in the numbers of private dwellings (especially decreases) should be treated with caution in such areas. In some cases, growth in private dwellings may not be apparent due to changes mentioned above.

Holiday areas have increasing numbers of small and large apartment buildings where there are units for **both usual residents and holiday makers**, however the current census classification for dwellings does not allow for this mixture in the one establishment. Users are advised that the classification is under review, as the ABS recognises these changes are occurring.

For specific problems encountered in using the dwelling counts please contact the Client Services Section of the ABS.

About this Release

ABOUT THIS RELEASE

Census Fact Sheets are designed to assist in the use and interpretation of Census data. They provide a summary of conceptual and data issues, and changes that have occurred since the last Census. Fact Sheets are developed and produced for a variety of areas, with a focus on a particular question of the Census form. The need for the development of a Fact Sheet is determined by the number of issues raised in a particular area. If there are numerous enquiries, a Fact Sheet will be developed to provide an explanation of the issue.

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